

**I. Listing of Claims**

CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Previously Presented) A lifting unit for lifting the rear part of a hood or bonnet, the lifting unit comprising an inner hollow cylindrical guide and an outer hollow cylindrical guide and at least one piston moveable relative to the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides, the piston being of hollow cylindrical form and being located between the inner hollow cylindrical guide and the outer hollow cylindrical guide, wherein an outer part of the inner hollow cylindrical guide defines a first groove and an inner part of the piston defines a second groove, the grooves being co-aligned when the piston is in an initial

condition relative to the inner hollow cylindrical guide, there being a releasable element contained within the grooves to retain the piston in the initial condition.

9. (Previously Presented) A lifting unit according to Claim 8 wherein the outer hollow cylindrical guide is provided with a re-entrant top portion configured to engage a piston head provided on the piston.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A lifting unit for lifting a rear part of a hood or bonnet of a vehicle, the lifting unit comprising ~~arrangement according to claim 10 wherein the first element comprises~~ an outer cylinder mounted on a support and ~~the second element comprises~~ a piston that includes a piston head slideable in the outer cylinder and a part which extends from the outer cylinder, the piston connected with the rear part of the hood or bonnet and moveable relative to the outer cylinder along a predetermined axis defined by the outer cylinder to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet, at a lower end of the first element is the outer cylinder includes an outwardly directed mounting flange ~~providing the abutment face, the flange resting on top of a resilient ring, which rest~~ rests on the support ~~and defines the resilient element, the flange being held in position by a retainer ring which has an inwardly directed lip which extends inwardly over the flange, wherein the resilient ring is configured to be deformed as the piston is moved relative to the outer cylinder to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet, permitting the entire lifting unit to tilt relative to the support for facilitating imparting a virtual pivoting movement to the rear part of the hood or bonnet.~~

19. (Currently Amended) A lifting unit ~~arrangement according to claim 18, further comprising~~ wherein ~~the first element further comprises~~ a housing defining a chamber for receiving a gas generator, an upper part of the housing supporting a hollow inner guide cylinder with a gas outlet port at a lower end of the hollow inner guide cylinder, a lowermost end of the outer cylinder being secured to the housing, the piston being hollow to receive the hollow inner

guide cylinder in a contracted condition of the lifting unit and a lower most end of the piston being provided with the piston head sealingly engaging the outer cylinder, and wherein an outer part of the hollow inner guide cylinder provides a groove and an inner part of the piston provides a ~~greve~~ groove being co-aligned when the piston is in an initial condition relative to the hollow inner guide cylinder, there being a releasable element contained within the co-aligned grooves to retain the piston in the initial condition.

20. (Previously Presented) The lifting arrangement according to claim 18 wherein the piston is provided with a mounting lug having an aperture for receiving a pivot pin.

21. (Currently Amended) A ~~lifting arrangement unit for lifting a rear part of a hood or bonnet of a vehicle, the lifting unit comprising according to Claim 7 an inner hollow cylindrical guide and an outer hollow cylindrical guide mounted on a support and a piston located between the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides, the piston connected with the rear part of the hood or bonnet and moveable relative to the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides along a predetermined axis defined by the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet,~~ wherein an outer part of the inner hollow cylindrical guide defines a first groove and an inner part of the piston defines a second groove, the first and second grooves being co-aligned when the piston is in an initial condition relative to the inner hollow cylindrical guide, there being a releasable element contained within the first

and second grooves to retain the piston in the initial condition, wherein the outer hollow cylindrical guide includes a mounting flange, and wherein the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides have an abutment face provided by the mounting flange, the inner and outer cylindrical guides being mounted with the abutment face engaging a resilient element mounted on the support, the resilient element being configured to be deformed as the piston is moved relative to the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet, permitting the entire lifting unit to tilt relative to the support for facilitating imparting a virtual pivoting movement to the rear part of the hood or bonnet.

22. (Currently Amended) A lifting unit for lifting a rear part of a hood or bonnet of a vehicle, the lifting unit comprising an inner hollow cylindrical guide and an outer hollow cylindrical guide mounted on a support and a piston located between the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides, according to Claim 7 wherein the piston connected with the rear part of the hood or bonnet and moveable relative to the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides along a predetermined axis defined by the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet, the outer hollow cylindrical guide is being provided with a re-entrant top portion configured to engage a piston head provided on the piston, wherein the outer hollow cylindrical guide includes a mounting flange, wherein the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides have an abutment face provided by the mounting flange, the inner and outer cylindrical guides being mounted with the abutment face engaging a

resilient element mounted on the support, the resilient element being configured to be deformed as the piston is moved relative to the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet, permitting the entire lifting unit to tilt relative to the support for facilitating imparting a virtual pivoting movement to the rear part of the hood or bonnet.

23. (New) A lifting unit according to Claim 18 wherein the piston is moved relative to the outer cylinder to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet on deployment of the lifting unit via gas produced from a gas generator, which is in fluid communication with the lifting unit.

24. (New) A lifting unit according to Claim 21 wherein the piston is moved relative to the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet on deployment of the lifting unit via gas produced from a gas generator, which is in fluid communication with the lifting unit.

25. (New) A lifting unit according to Claim 22 wherein the piston is moved relative to the inner and outer hollow cylindrical guides to lift the rear part of the hood or bonnet on deployment of the lifting unit via gas produced from a gas generator, which is in fluid communication with the lifting unit.